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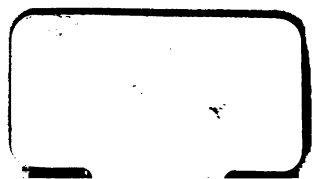
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MASTER AND LACKEY

And Other Poems

BY

CHARLES R. HART



L.L.

BOSTON

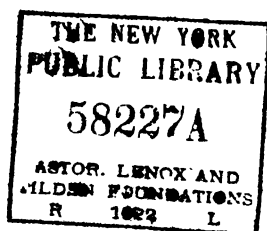
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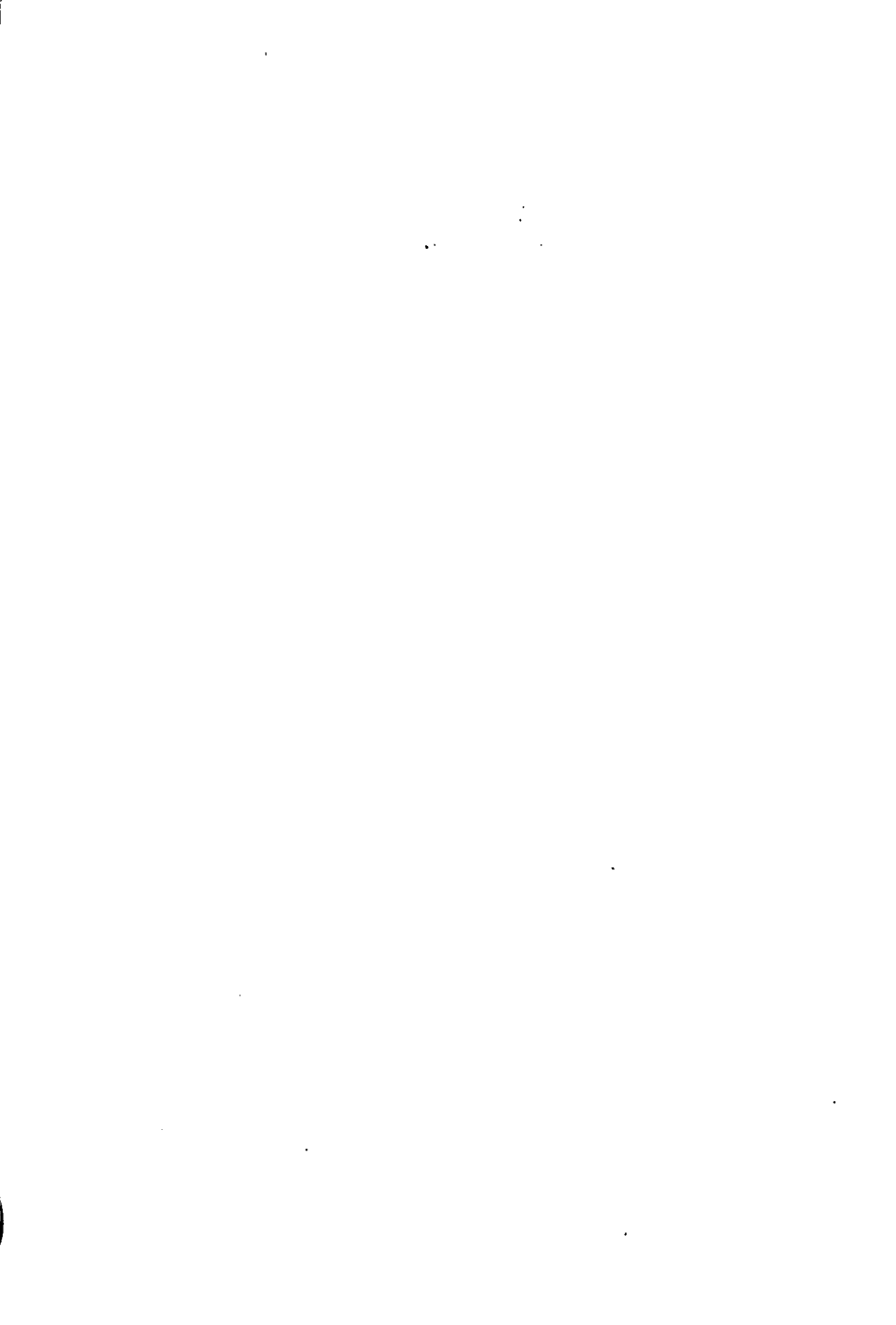


MADE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO
MY MOTHER

TX 126



FOREWORD

I

When many hundreds labor day and night
To torture nations with ideals of fright,
Can I have hopes that I shall win the palm,
I who have nothing but ideals of calm?

2

When countless poets sing of toil and strife
And the deceptions of our mortal life,
Should I aspire to win success today,
I whose sole gospel is delight and play?

3

Am I not mad, attempting to beguile
This sad and thoughtful people with a smile?
Today, when all the peoples hurrying go,
Before me shall the Nation's step be slow?

4

And yet with such loud ravings at the door
There should be nothing to astound men more
Than to behold my poems: see I'm gay,
I smile at errors I have thrown away!

5

Foreword

5

My only message to humanity
Is to remove the centuries' debris,
To let once more aspiring nations scan
The features of earth's greatest wonder, Man!

6

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MASTER AND LACKEY

Laughter

LAUGHTER

Why were the truest types of greatness seen
In times when men were godlike and serene,
When Plato taught the riches of the mind,
When Homer sang so well, though he was blind?

Why is it? Search ye poets, search ye, ye scribes,
Ye preachers, with your senseless diatribes!
Is it the food they eat, the drink they quaff
That makes men great? No, it is just their laugh.

So, were I a reformer, I should climb
Through Heaven, through all Nature, through all
Time,
Until there was no being low or high
Who knew not how to laugh as well as I.

INTERLUDE

It is the custom in our northern land
That ere he starts to sing the bard should stand
Before his door and ring a noisy gong,
Calling men in to hear him sing a song.

There, where there is no treading of men's feet,
Where there is just a memory of the street,
The poet dares a truer tale to tell,
And poetry's herself again as well.

I'll think that you have come inside the door;
I hear the noises of the crowd no more;
I wait for one more hearer to come in,
Favor's her name: she's come? Then I'll begin.

FABLE

There was a horse who would not venture through
The barn door, for each time the others went
He noticed that straightway the air was rent
With the loud ringing of their iron hoofs
Upon the floor. Said he: "This will not do!

Enough of walls and roofs!

No longer to a place I'll cling

Where, by the sound of hoofs upon the floor,

By that and nothing more,

The neighbors round about

Cry to each other, though not looking out:

"There goes another horse, the clumsy thing!"

No, all my life henceforth I'll pass

Silently treading on the grass.

My hoofs I'll cover over

With daisies, buttercups and clover.

Men shall perceive me by the eye

Or else not know when I pass by."

So in the meadows all the summer days

Contently men saw our rebel graze.

Alas, where ploughmen used to go

The winter came and cast the seeds of snow!

Back to the once scorned stable

The poor horse went as well as he was able.

MASTER AND LACKEY

PROLOGUE

I

A master and his lackey fled away
From earth. The fact is strange, for, as you know,
Masters at any moment come and go
But lackies wait until their dying day.

2

Howbeit, sirs, master and lackey went
Together; one was found who would consent
To separation from his darling earth:
The lackey was rewarded with much mirth.

3

If you are not corrupted by the words
Of modern poets, if you love the birds,
Then come: let Fancy saw the prison bars
Of earth and let you out among the stars.

Master and Lackey

DEPARTURE

LACKEY—Master, I should have thought these
clouds, this sun,
These brooks and winds going their tune-
ful ways,
Were cause enough to make all beings
glad;
But then I chanced to turn and look at
you.
Do you know your face is sad?

MASTER Of course it is,
For all day I was toiling at my book.
How can their looks be anything but sad
Who wish to write about the human
heart?

LACKEY—Which heart? the heart that beats here
in the breast,
Or that which makes mannikins dance
and play?

MASTER—I mean this beating heart.

LACKEY. Once, my dear master,
I met a man who wrote about the heart
And he was very cheerful.

MASTER. But not I:
My wish is to be terribly sincere.

LACKEY—You have too grim a look to be sincere,
Sincere men smile.

MASTER. I say sincere men frown.

Master and Lackey

LACKEY—Do they do nothing else than frown, my master?

MASTER—Sometimes they weep, sometimes they shout and curse.

But there are no occasions when they smile.

LACKEY—What are sincere men so sincere about?

MASTER—About the truth.

LACKEY. What is the truth, my master?

MASTER—Something that makes you shudder when you hear it,

It casts such gloom on the astounded world;

Something that makes the speaker lose his voice,

And he must either whisper truth or shout it.

LACKEY—Where should I look for truth and find her, sir?

MASTER—The surest place to find the truth, my man,

Is on some battlefield. In peaceful times

Go to the parliaments of nation, yes,

Or to the churches—you will find her there.

But wheresoever she may be, the truth

Is always just the same, a timid thing;

She's shrinking in a corner, some brave man

Defends her from the world.

Master and Lackey

Not underneath this canopy of blue.
You must have suffered: who can live
at ease
And know the human heart? But when
you suffer,
O do not suffer as our neighbors do,
Quietly, unobtrusively, O no!
You must be violent; the violent
Alone can have a knowledge of the heart.
Search out a land where men are violent;
In peaceful countries hearts are never
known.
How I despise you for your peacefulness,
My countrymen!

LACKEY. And yet you live among them.

MASTER—I'd live no longer with my countrymen;
I should abandon this too peaceful star,
Did I not have my cloud. But, tell me,
Lackey,

Where is my cloud?

LACKEY. What cloud, dear master, tell me?

MASTER—The little cloud I bade you hold in leash,
My little, individual, golden cloud,
The only cloud in all this atmosphere!

LACKEY—I had forgotten it.

MASTER. You let it go,
My only consolation, my companion!
I bore it in my left hand or my right
In all my journeys, it was my protection
Against the evils of the dazzling sun-
light.

Master and Lackey.

I warned you not to let it float away,
For once a cloud is gone 'twill not re-
turn.

I am afraid to live without a cloud.
Unkind fates which deprive me of a
cloud,

What would ye do with me?

LACKEY. You'd think, dear master,
They wished that should live in the broad
daylight.

MASTER—O pityful intelligence of lackies,
To think the fates could have such low
designs!

I cannot live without some mistiness.
This is a warning and a prodigy:
I have been too contented with one cloud,
I should have lived surrounded with a
thousand.

I'll go away, I know too well the dangers
That lands are rife with under cloudless
skies.

LACKEY—(Aside). He might be tempted to be
natural,
Perhaps some day he would not be
grotesque,
He might cease to be irritated!

MASTER. Lackey,
I'm going to the fatherland of clouds
This very day.

LACKEY. Where is that country, sir?

MASTER—There in that farthest star, in the abode
of truth.

Master and Lackey

LACKEY.

I'm going with you.

MASTER.

If you wish,

Though what's a lackey good for, if he
does not

Bear on his wrist a gold clod like a fal-
con?

1

I wonder when the ancient strife began
Between the master and his serving man?
Was it the day the master had to wait
Because his lackey was so slow of gait?

2

How could he well be anything but slow?
Often he turned ere he resolved to go.
He wished to keep a picture in his brain
Which not all Heaven's clouds and mists should
stain.

AUTHORITY

LACKEY—Dear master, here's the nearest spot on
earth

To Heaven and you have your foot upon
it:

How fortunate I'm here!

MASTER.

How fortunate?

You tell me when your master stands at
last

Master and Lackey

Close to the stars he's fortunate to have
One who is just a lackey for companion?
What insolence!

LACKEY. Indeed 'tis fortunate.

MASTER—Have I then need of you to step out
boldly

Into these beautiful and golden clouds?

LACKEY—No, master.

MASTER. Have I need of you to turn
My face in most unspeakable disdain
From yon low earth that's only fit for
lackies?

LACKEY—No, master.

MASTER. Do I need you to fill up
Each moment the gold goblet of my brain
With aspirations, boundless aspirations?

LACKEY—No, master. You can do these things
alone,

I know that you can do them. You're a
wonder

For filling up the goblet of your brain
With aspirations and for always turning
Your face from earth and stepping boldly
out

Into the beautiful and golden clouds.

MASTER—Will you then tell me what I need you
for?

LACKEY—Yes, But first tell me, what is Heaven
like?

Say, in what harbor will you cast your
anchor?

Master and Lackey

MASTER—Wherever it may please me. Gracious,
man!

When one sets out for Heaven, he des-
pises

Compass and chart. His goal is Heaven,
Heaven!

It matters not what port he touches at;
There are no coasts whereon he may be
wrecked,

The whole land is a harbor.

LACKEY. Tell me, master,
Where did you find your map of heaven?

MASTER. Lackey,
I found it where a master finds all
things,

Whereof he may have need, within his
mind.

LACKEY—It does not seem the same that I was
shown.

I've had a talk with the geographers.

MASTER—I tell you, lackey, no geographers
Can guide you to that land. You need
no guide.

To reach the Heavenly land beyond the
stars,

Lay out your course past Venus or past
Mars;

What does it matter?

LACKEY. They insist it matters

Greatly.

MASTER. I say it does not.

Master and Lackey

LACKEY. You'll believe me.

If I display a permit, duly signed,
To travel on a road that's practicable
Up to the shining gates of Paradise.
I have obtained it at the office yonder,
A passport for a master and his lackey.

MASTER—It is a forgery.

LACKEY. They signed it with
Pens all of gold that had a Heavenly
lustre.

See here the signature, consul of Heaven.

MASTER—I'll submit to a passport on the earth,
Not on the way to Heaven.

LACKEY. There are guardsmen
Who will demand to see it 'mid the stars.

MASTER—Let them demand it: they'll have none
from me.

LACKEY—They'll lock you up upon some distant
star.

MASTER—'T would be romantic, just what I desire!

LACKEY—So be it, master. Let us then go forth.
We will begin our travels in the sky
On any route you please. (*Aside*). The
guardsmen soon

Will set us in the straight and narrow
road,

And then, O the complaining I shall hear
Because the road passes a certain star

And not another. (*Aloud*). Come, good
master, come!

MASTER—See, he has stepped before me into
Heaven!

Master and Lackey

You lackey, turn there! Come and follow me!

Here lies the road!

LACKEY—(*Aside*). Aye, there it lies indeed,
And I avoided it to make him choose it.

I

The lackey questioned: "In that distant place,
What will the nature be of Time and Space?"
To which the master, with that way of his
Men love, said: "Something other than it is.

2

"For all things that have worth and dignity
Are jealous lest the eye of man should see.
There's nothing which attends without disguise
This mighty masquerade beneath the skies."

TASTE

MASTER—I love the waves that break upon these
shores,
For here the waters of the firmament
Make, as they roll, the music of the
spheres.

LACKEY—It is good music, sir.

MASTER. There's none below

That equals it.

LACKEY. With this sound ringing round me

Master and Lackey

And charming all my senses, still I seem
To hear far off the notes of a guitar,
And I am happy as I hear them, sir.

MASTER—This music drowns all others.

LACKEY. How is it
I hear that far off earthly music still?

MASTER—Because a lackey has imperfect ears
And when he hears these sounds ineffable
Still minds the earthly music of a day.

LACKEY—It seems that I have more capacious ears
Than you, my master.

MASTER. There is a magician
Who touches mortal ears and they are
changed.

Her name is Taste. Those whom her
touch has favored

Must live forever by Eternal seas.

Who when he hears the stars singing to-
gether

Would care to hear mere earthly chor-
uses?

A moment there is silence, then one star
Is singing all alone, then two and then
A hundred chant together. Heavenly
music

Is sometimes loud and sometimes soft
and low,

And yet the very softest notes of it
Deafen you to the music of the earth.

Listen! another symphony begins.

If that might be in this Eternity

Master and Lackey

Where all has been foreseen and fore-
dained

You'd say that some musician impro-
vised,

You'd say that he discovered every note
And to the next looked, as we hearers do,
As to a revelation.

(LACKEY. Sit you down.

MASTER—The music pauses for an instant: list!
What silence! You must know these
silences

Are portions of the music.

(LACKEY. O there are

No silences for me: far, far away
I hear once more the notes of a guitar,
And what is strange, to my uncultured
ear,

It seems a part of this same symphony.

MASTER—'Tis well then that the silences are rare,
Or all too often earth's discordant notes
Might gain from you unmerited ap-
plause.

One day, as they approached a certain star,
A sprite was seen who shouted from afar:
"Hail master, hail thou king and guide of men!"
'Twas at the lackey he was gazing then.

THE MENAGERIE

LACKEY—Master I have been looking at those trees
As long a time as some poor creatures live

Master and Lackey

That haunt the fallen leaves upon the
ground.

Will you believe it; I've not seen a bird
In all that time?

MASTER. Of course you have seen none.

LACKEY—What is that swaying on the topmost
bough?

Is it a bird, sir? Say it is a bird.

MASTER—'Tis just a sprite.

LACKEY. Alas, such restful shadows

And not a bird to nestle in the shade!

O master, what is that that's scurrying
Under the trees?

MASTER. It is another sprite.

LACKEY—Alas, I hoped it was a beast: I would

See other things than leaves to cast a
shadow

And look on other sights of dappled
beauty

Than bits of sunny ground—I see an
eagle

Soaring among the clouds!

MASTER. You see a sprite.

LACKEY—And what was that which plunged into
the lake

As we approached?

MASTER. A sprite.

LACKEY. O master, master!

No love-sick woman that adored you, sir,

Has ever looked upon you as I shall

Henceforth. I'll glue my eyes upon you,
sir,

Master and Lackey

As on Heaven's wonder, for you are a
man

And you've a touch of earth.

MASTER. I am a spirit.

LACKEY—Alas, I thought that you were still a man!
Where shall I gaze now and be satisfied?
Heaven be praised! here is this lake be-
side me:

I'll look there at myself, I still am earthy.

MASTER—Yes, so you are.

LACKEY. How I admire myself!

To think I am the representative
Of that great thing called Man! All
hail, mankind!

It is not egotism to admire
The only remnant of the race: 'tis duty
To admire what is left of something
noble.

O may I never go so far afield,
May I not ever be so long away,
That I forget thy customs, pleasant
earth,

That I become wholly unlike a man.

Let me, o'er whatsoever mirror I may
bend,

Still find the likeness which I find today,
Or else destroy all mirrors save that one
I still shall love to gaze on, memory;
Then I shall tell the angels up above
That in my palmy days I was a man.
Thou splendid fellow! come reach me thy
fingers

Master and Lackey

Just to the water's surface: There, I
clasp them.

MASTER—You are embracing shadows.

LACKEY. I resemble

My master.

MASTER. Come, your cuff is dripping.

LACKEY. He

Says his whole sleeve is dripping: this
is nothing.

MASTER—Behold a breeze has come to break your
mirror.

It is a sign of Heaven's disapproval.

LACKEY—O how I wish I had been vain of old!
I should have come provided with a mir-
ror.

What hours I should have spent admir-
ing man!

O master, tell me I am comely.

MASTER. You

Are just a lackey.

LACKEY. I'm humanity,

Today, begging your pardon.

MASTER. Bravo, then!

Mankind is well personified in lackies.

LACKEY—O then you were a lackey once.

MASTER. I never

Was a mere man.

LACKEY. I have a sudden hope.

Tell me what is the season of the year?

Tell me it's winter, master?

MASTER. It is summer.

Master and Lackey

LACKEY—Then no spring zephyrs will bring back
the birds!

Sir, you have made me very melancholy.

MASTER—The sprites are songsters.

LACKEY. I don't like their voices!
Are there no beasts to run along the
ground?

MASTER—There are the sprites.

LACKEY. Master, I am alarmed.
Come, let us calculate. How far, my
master,
Would you suppose the nearest brindled
cow?

MASTER—Some million miles!

LACKEY. O this is terrible!
How far the nearest rabbit?

MASTER. Millions too.

LACKEY—O master! and the nearest roaring lion?

MASTER—He must be the same distance.

LACKEY. O my master.
What a long way to be from animals!

MASTER—Where would you be? beneath the lion's
paw?

LACKEY—Rather than here. It's terrible I say.
We cannot travel so far from the beasts,
The guileless and the kind, ingenuous
beasts,
And not be far astray. O let us hasten.
Somewhere where there are beasts,
though we should find
Only a poodle dog I should be happy.

Master and Lackey

I never was so fond of poodle dogs
As now. I think I could support this
journey

If at my side there ran a poodle dog,
Something to say "Here, doggie" to. In-
stead

All I can say is "Come, thou lovely
sprite!"

A spineless thing which is too well-be-
haved

And needs the rod to cure him of obedi-
ence.

Come, half a dozen sprites, and take a
licking.

MASTER—O impious language! You are still a
slave.

LACKEY—O master, you would not behold me die.

MASTER—Why not? I always wished that you
might die:

'Tis the best thing that one can wish for
lackies.

There's then the hope that they may turn
to spirits.

LACKEY—Then I'll not die, if I must be a spirit.

No, you have frightened me back into
life.

I feared that I should die without a dog,
But while there's life there's hope of see-
ing dogs

And being dead I'd never see them more.

No, I elect to live. I shall take courage.

Master and Lackey

I will support the fearful loneliness
That comes upon me when I think I am
A million miles from any dog or cow.
It may be that the Lord is merciful,
Perhaps there's a menagerie above.
I know where I shall spend my Sundays
then,
Looking at birds and beasts I once was
fond of.

End of the Menagerie

When he beheld with his astonished eyes
An angel flitting starlike in the skies
The lackey said: "To be a bird is best,
For what's the good of wings without a nest?"

LOVE-LETTERS

LACKEY—Master, your eyes have grown so big
you'd think

That you are seeing visions.

MASTER. So I am.

LACKEY—Here's a root which will cure you.

MASTER. Cast it from you,

For that must be a bitter, harmful root
Which cures from seeing visions.

LACKEY. I consume
One every day and still my face is ruddy.

MASTER—No matter, for I have an antidote:
I think your root would be innocuous
And I should still see visions.

LACKEY. I believe it.

Master and Lackey

MASTER—Now go away. Dig roots if so you wish,
Since that's a fit employment for a lackey.
I shall stay here upon this promontory
While far and wide the planets cast the
 shadows,
Which on the earth are cast by fleeting
 clouds.

LACKEY—What will you do there, sir?

MASTER. I'll write a letter.

LACKEY—This is no time for writing letters, sir:
You're seeing visions.

MASTER. 'Tis the time to write.
I'm seeing visions, therefore I must
 write.

LACKEY—I'll write a letter too.

MASTER. If you've a thought
That's worthy penning, write it; I care
 not.

LACKEY—Of course I have or shall have in a
 moment:
I'll bite this root a bit.

MASTER. O lackey, lackey!

LACKEY—(*After a moment*). My letter's written,
 sir.

MASTER. Mine's just begun.

LACKEY—Read mine, perhaps 'twill aid you.

MASTER. I'll not read it.

I read the poets and philosophers
Before I write a letter—nothing more.

LACKEY—Yes, so your correspondents have remark-
 ed.

Master and Lackey

- I wish you'd read my letter.
MASTER. Read it to me.
What did you find to say?
LACKEY. What did I find?
What *could* I find? There's but one
formula
Used by the honest lovers of the world:
"I love you and I hope you love me,
dear."
MASTER—Is that all?
LACKEY. What is there to add, except
The ordinary postscript, oft omitted:
"If you don't love me, I'll not love you,
dear"?
MASTER—O that is sacrilege!
LACKEY. 'Tis honest love.
MASTER—You'd better cast your letter in the fire
For posting; you will find no angels here
To carry such a missive.
LACKEY. Here are twenty
Clamoring for the honor!
MASTER. They're mistaken;
Let me enlighten them.
LACKEY. It is too late,
You'll not o'ertake them now. See how
it glows
Borne starlike in their hands across the
skies,
The honest letter of an honest lover!
MASTER—I pray you, watch the angels crowd
around me

Master and Lackey

When I have finished mine. See, here's
one now.

LACKEY—Look out, he's reaching for your pen!

MASTER. There always
Were angels reaching for my pen and
often

I let them write for me.

LACKEY. May I behold
What you have written ere it is too late,
Before your letter has been spoiled by
angels?

MASTER. Yes, if you wish

LACKEY. I'll keep away from angels,
They might corrupt my style. O, O,
O, O!

MASTER—What is the matter?

LACKEY. See what you have written!
I think an angel held your pen already,
No mortal could have had such thoughts
as these.

MASTER—I never cease to study day and night
How one may write love-letters like an
angel.

LACKEY—'Tis evident. But you'll not mail this,
sir.

MASTER—Why not?

LACKEY—The postman is a good, kind man;
I would not have him partner to such
deeds.
I have ideals, I would believe the truth
Is fostered by the post.

Master and Lackey

MASTER. What are you saying?
O think how many lies are circulating
Each morning in the post!

LACKEY. Here are no falsehoods.
No letter ever was more purposeful
And more sincere.

MASTER. There lies the trouble, sir.
Your letter is too full of purposes.
There's some one groaning for the lack
of them
Because you piled too many in one letter.
Know, there is not so much sincerity
In all the world that one may justly
hold
So great a wealth of it. Restore, restore
To all the men you stole them from, un-
thinking,
The treasures which are theirs. Then
shall each man
With his due portion of sincerity
Live happy in the world. O why con-
spire
With any maiden just because she's fair
To pile up purposes a hundred deep?
A few will be enough.

MASTER. You've taken away
My inspiration.

LACKEY. Honesty has done so,
Since you restore the wealth that is not
yours.
Does not that lend you inspiration, sir?
I think it is the time to be inspired

Master and Lackey

When you have just accomplished something honest.

MASTER—"Tis true, but tell me, lackey. I can't write

So brief a note as yours. What shall I do
To make this present letter true and honest?

Can it be done?

LACKEY. I think it can be done.

Yes, master, I am sure it can be done.

Replace "forevers" with "until tomorrow,"

Instead of "steadfast" write the word
"well-meaning,"

For "your devoted" substitute "your hopeful."

I think your letter will be honest yet,

As true as it may be and speak of love.

"In yonder star which one can scarcely see,"

The master said, "lie Health and Verity."

The lackey answered: "Master, are they there?
I had imagined they were everywhere."

AFFINITIES

MASTER—Here I have lain the whole night through
and slept

Only those moments when all things are
drowsy,

The fading stars, the unawakened morn.

Master and Lackey

LACKEY—The sun has had the time, after the challenge

Of his first beams, to gird himself a bit :
He will be coming now. O happy sun!

MASTER—O why reproach the sun with being happy?

The sun has too unlimited a sway
To be long happy, he is always rising
Upon some place where people are unhappy.

LACKEY—Who is unhappy here?

MASTER. You ask me that,
You who beheld a woman scorn my love!

LACKEY—Do you then love her so?

MASTER. How does it happen
That, when I tell my fellows of my love,
All ask me this: "Do you then love her so?"

LACKEY—How should we know?

MASTER. You've but to look at me.

LACKEY—No, master, there is something more to do;

I look at you and ask the question still.

MASTER—O what is this that's shown upon the face,

If not the heart?

LACKEY. I think it is the heart.

MASTER—Then my look's all devotion, candor, love.

LACKEY—No, sir, not if what's shown there is the heart.

Master and Lackey

MASTER—Behold the sun! Night and the moon
retreating

Seem elsewhere like a host proudly ad-
vancing.

O Sun, illumine this garden where I lost
her,

Light up each corner as though there
were hidden

The faults which have displeased her:
I'll uproot them.

LACKEY—I'd not disturb this garden: it is fair.

MASTER—No garden's fair that has displeased a
woman,

No character is fair that has displeased
one,

I will uproot my faults and in their place
I'll plant flowers of her choosing.

LACKEY. Tell me, master.

Do you then love her so?

MASTER. Again that question.

Of course I do.

LACKEY. And would you marry her?

MASTER—Of course I would.

LACKEY. And should she marry you?

"Of course she should," is that your an-
swer, master?

MASTER—I know not if she loves me.

LACKEY. Nor do I.

But should she marry you, that is the
question.

MASTER—I know not.

Master and Lackey

LACKEY. Here's a thing which must be known.

MASTER—How should one know it?

LACKEY. I will tell you, master.

You say you love her?

MASTER. Yes.

LACKEY. How do you love her?

MASTER—Heavens! I told you when I said: "I love her."

LACKEY—We say so many things saying "I love her"

I think we should be careful when we say it.

But, master, I am curious today.

Tell me your age please.

MASTER. Thirty.

LACKEY. What is hers?

MASTER—Twenty.

LACKEY. Good. Now inform me: do you love
With love that's fitting in a man of
thirty?

MASTER—Of course I do. Your questions now are
answered.

LACKEY—I merely have begun to ask them, master.
He who is teaching reason to a lover
Has always just begun. Is it the love
Which men of thirty feel for girls of
twenty

When they are well inspired?

MASTER. I said, I love her.

LACKEY—Yes, but here lies the danger. Once I
knew

Master and Lackey

A man who loved¹ a maid of twenty sum-
mers

With a most beautiful and true affection,
But 'twas a love befitting brides of thirty.
It proved the maid's undoing. Let all
lovers

Be mindful of the loved one's age.

MASTER.

'Tis true.

But when I think she has but twenty
summers

I find I love her with befitting love.

I think you must be done with question-
ing.

LACKEY—O no! there's still the question: does
she love you

With love that's proper to a girl of
twenty

For a bridegroom whose winters num-
ber thirty?

MASTER—How should I know?

LACKEY.

'Tis something you must know.

Suppose she dreamed that you were only
twenty,

Suppose that she imagined you were
forty,

Suppose she thought you any age but that

Which is the true one? O, I'm tremb-
ling, sir,

At the mere thought of it!

MASTER.

Rise, golden Sun!

Illume this lackey's brain. Teach him
to solve

Master and Lackey

True subtleties in love but never these
Imaginary ones.

LACKEY. I still have others
For you to solve. But look! there is a
woman
Walking in yonder garden.

MASTER: It is she!
Behold her there, the woman who has
scorned me!

You ask what sort of love is in my soul?
It is the sort of love that lovers feel
When at a woman's feet. But I shall
win her.

When I have won her you'll observe, I
trust,

There's no importance in a lover's age,
Since Time is lost in love's Eternity.

LACKEY—Not only women love to hide their age:
Suitors conceal it also when they woo.

I

"Shall I not talk of Greatness?" one day said
The lackey to his master as they fled
Across the firmament before some fear
The master, not the lackey, saw appear.

2

"To hear you talk of it I'd be enchanted.
You've never done so yet," the master panted.
To which the lackey answered: "I began
To talk of greatness when I talked of man."

Master and Lackey

DECORUM

MASTER—Must I then warn you once again, O
lackey,
To keep a calm and reverent demeanor?
Can you not walk with greater dignity?
I think you have forgotten that this is
A promenade across Eternity.

LACKEY—May I no longer turn a somersault?

MASTER—I think the demon had a fertile brain
Who first imagined trials for mankind.
The worst of trials is a vulgar lackey
Who thinks that he may turn a somer-
sault
When on a journey to the court of
Heaven!

Remember we are in the retinue
Of all great men: the ages are the suite
Of all the great men who have gone be-
fore.

LACKEY—I thought it lawful to turn somersaults
When, see! the very stars are doing it.
It makes their flames leap up with bright-
er glow
Each time they turn a sudden somer-
sault.

't is the contagion of their playfulness,
The joviality of the bright stars,
That made me do it.

MASTER. Watch those on ahead.
Mark well if St. Augustine may be seen

Master and Lackey

Making his stately way: search well to
find

Impressive figures, St. Bernard, Beethov-
en,

And Michael Angelo. All these have
suffered

Great sorrows and they meditate upon
them

As solemnly they go. Upon their gait
Model your own, and since you are a
lackey

With trifling woes that lend no air of
pain,

Meditate on the sorrows of great men.

Go borrow griefs if you have not your
own,

It is no matter how you come by it

Provided you shall have a look of woe.

LACKEY—I pray you, master, send me back to
school.

How shall I ever learn decorum here?

See! the whole band is turning somer-
saults.

What shall I do?

MASTER. This is the rearguard only.

Look farther on to ages when great men
Through a whole lifetime were not
known to smile.

Those, lackey, were the great, heroic
times.

LACKEY—You say that they were never known to
smile?

Master and Lackey

MASTER—Sometimes they smiled but with such
looks of pain
You felt they never should be asked to
smile
Since smiling, caused them such great
suffering.

LACKEY—(*Who has climbed a tree*).
How far, think you, I ought to see, O
master,
Perched here upon this tree of inspira-
tion?

MASTER—Were you your master you would see so
far
You'd never talk again of the horizon,
At least this one which binds our mortal
sight.

LACKEY—I'm but a lackey, yet I see a thing
That would astound you greatly.

MASTER. What is that?

LACKEY—Why, there's an angel standing at the
head
Of the vast column: he has just alight-
ed
And he is dancing. Those who lead the
way
Are dancing now. Look, others imitate
them.

MASTER—What is that wayward angel thinking
of?
Come down, come down, you should not
see such things

Master and Lackey

When mounted on the tree of inspiration.

LACKEY—And now the impulse is communicated
From rank to rank, soon no one will be
left

Who is not gaily dancing.

MASTER. I shall not.
I shall not be susceptible to frenzy.

LACKEY—(*Descending*). The madness is upon me,
I must dance.

MASTER—'t is true, the souls of all the dead are
dancing.

I alone screen them from humanity
And upon me the fate of man depends
Lest they learn the actions of the dead
And know what revelries take place in
Heaven.

If I am calm they'll think the dead are
calm.

O let me still maintain my dignity,
Merciful God!

LACKEY. Here are the souls of the dead
Forming a ring around you, master.

MASTER. Abomination! O

LACKEY. See they make him dance!
Yes it is true the dead are dancing, men,
O men and stars, come let us dance in
tune!

I would recount the lackey's strange mistake

Master and Lackey

He told himself: "A compass I will make;"
And thought that he could make a guide of worth
On which the needle pointed back to earth!

PATRIOTISM

MASTER—Until the new tide shall set in to Heaven
Here will I rest. They chafe impatiently
A long, long time, you know, these Heav-
enly waves
Until that tide when sun and moon to-
gether
Shall draw the waves along.

LACKEY. I hear them chafing.

MASTER—Now we are here I'd be no more re-
minded
That there's a firmament where planets
turn.
I would forget they are revolving there;
I wish henceforth to concentrate my
thought
On this sole planet.

LACKEY. Why is that, my master?
I thought the other stars were beautiful.

MASTER—You see you may find beauty anywhere
And like all things that one finds any-
where
't is of but little value.

LACKEY. There were men
Of kindly hearts on every star we passed
Who proved that all the stars are hos-
pitable.

Master and Lackey

MASTER—Why will you talk of hospitality
And beauty? Think of purpose, of big
things!

LACKEY—But master, why do any undertake
A journey in the skies? Think you it is
To see things our as yet unopened lids
Hid from us at our birth and nothing
more?

MASTER—You do not need to travel, in my quest,
For I am searching for a mystery.

LACKEY—Why are you looking for a mystery?

MASTER—What, pray, should any man be looking
for
If not a mystery?

LACKEY. Please tell me, master;
What is a mystery?

MASTER. A mystery
Is that which is peculiar to each star;
It is the only still uncommon thing.

LACKEY—I thought that reason also was uncommon.

MASTER—If you will not believe in mystery,
Be still. I feel the frenzy coming on:
Behold the phantoms which my will
evokes!

LACKEY—Who is that yonder?

MASTER. That's the genius, sir,
Of this great planet. Can you think of
aught

LACKEY, More wonderful than that? I can indeed.

Master and Lackey

Suppose the genius of the Universe
Rose up before us! But you'll not evoke
her

In periods of frenzy: she's too calm,
Too beautiful and yet magnificent
Ever to come when minds are in disorder.
I've often seen her as I walked along
From star to star, yet it was not a vision;
It was with waking eyes.

MASTER. What should I do
If I should cease to look for mysteries
Upon this planet?

LACKEY. What I'm doing, master.

MASTER—What's that? You have the air of doing nothing.

LACKEY—I give my life to reminiscences.
Strange, since I made that journey
through the stars
All things seem made for waking mem-
ories;
One thing reminds me always of another,
Or, rather, seems to be that self-same
thing.

I'd lose my way if I should go again,
All things are so alike. If you, my
master.

Should make with me a far-off rendezvous,

Though you described it ever so exactly
I might turn up in Mars and you be
waiting

Master and Lackey

In Venus, sir.

MASTER. O ruler of the Heavens,
Think of the risk I took!

LACKEY. What was the danger?

MASTER—Suppose that like you I had walked
among

The stars and lost my faith in mystery!

LACKEY—Be thankful that you made the journey,
sir,

And are, today, unchanged by what you
saw!

MASTER—Indeed I'm thankful.

LACKEY. Yet you would suppose
That after all a journey's goal is change.

MASTER—Not at all. As I went I cried defiance
To the false stars which clamored to be
known.

That is the reason why we walk abroad,
To be unmoved by all the things we see
And talk about the mystery at home.

LACKEY—Let's go again. Perhaps you'll love the
stars

And cease to talk about the mystery.

MASTER—Never. That would be treason. I'll not
stir

From this enlightened planet any more,
But serve the mystery until I die.

LACKEY—I think that you might take a holiday.
Perhaps the mystery's a genial soul
And children could evoke her just as
well.

Master and Lackey

The master said: "We have forsaken all
That rolls in sight of our terrestrial ball."

The lackey answered: "How can such things be?
Shall man abandon then his memory?"

DOMINATION

MASTER—I wish to live in the star round which the
world moves.

LACKEY—That's a star no man can live upon:
It is the sun.

MASTER. You think it is the sun
Because you are a lackey, but I tell you
The centre of the world is this same star
Where we now make our home.

LACKEY. Have you a measure
To prove it is? Pace a star's nightly
 journey
Each way from here and though you still
 meet stars
That seem to crowd about our planet's
 skirts
You have proved nothing: you must pace
 so far
On every side that it will seem your goal
Is Old Age and Decay and Dissolution;
The distance will be written in your face,
Recorded in deep furrows on your brow.
No man can well return with ruddy
 looks

Master and Lackey

Who proves where is the centre of the world.

MASTER—Not by my aimless pacing through the stars

Shall I prove this the centre; rather, lackey,

I shall stir up such turbulence in Heaven That men will know the centre by the storms

That come from it—only the core of things

Could be the centre of such violence.

LACKEY—Although the seat of government be changed

Must the new centre be so far away?

Why make the New so distant from the Old?

MASTER—The change must be apparent to the world.

If the new centre were not far away, Men might believe the universe revolved

As it has always done, about the sun.

LACKEY—I think there is another reason, master. You wish to hear the rushing of the stars, Hurrying to new stations in your train.

MASTER—Precisely, man: you have imagination.

LACKEY—How do you know that in their distant realms

Some stars may not be found indifferent?

Master and Lackey

When men should speak of the indifference
Of distant, mighty stars you would be
angry;
And then, besides there is an edge of
things
That never has been crossed even by
stars.

MASTER—It is because the stars are timorous;
They're waiting for my hosts to go before.

I'll conquer all, even the Emptiness
Of outer spaces.

LACKEY. Do you think the sun
Will readily obey?

MASTER Unless the Light
Becomes my vassal there shall be no light
In all the world. This is the age when
kings
Are being fast dethroned. Shall this old
tyrant,
The oldest potentate in all the world,
Be still allowed to rule? It is high time
That he too should be humbled in the
dust.

LACKEY—Are you determined then to be a king?

MASTER—I and the fates are of one mind in this.

LACKEY—I hope the sun will peacefully submit:
I would not live to see my master slay
The aged and the venerable Light.

Master and Lackey

I

The master asked the lackey: "Is it right
To look for treasures in the broad daylight?
No, let us set to digging in the glade
With something which we will not call a spade."

2

He was prepared to dig if there was need
To where there are so many mouths to feed
In China. But just then, O! strange to tell,
From a tree rising near the treasure fell.

HEAVEN

LACKEY—The night has come, the time for sleepi-
ness,

And I must sleep.

MASTER. You show a lackey's mind.

I am not sleepy though the silent night
Says we must be contented with her
stars

If we still wish for pleasure from our
eyes;

And though this may be the accustomed
time

For slumber in the world where mortals
sleep,

I say this is the realm of wakefulness:
We are in Heaven.

LACKEY. Little did I think

That my first impulse, coming to these
shores,

Master and Lackey

Would be to sleep! There were those in
the world

Who said that here is the Eternal Sleep.
I thought them wrong.

MASTER. Of course they were: here Heaven
Revokes forever her decree of sleep.

LACKEY—I wish to sleep: Good master, let me
sleep.

MASTER—Awake.

LACKEY—O come and tell me at the dawn
To waken.

MASTER. You are still enslaved to error.
Here is no dawn and here no twilight is,
Here is no change.

LACKEY. O blessed Change! it brought us
Slumber.

MASTER. If you could rid your mind of sleep,
Full soon should this obsession of the
night
Leave you as well; you'd understand
there's nothing
To cloud or alter the eternal day
That reigns in Heaven.

LACKEY. I was fond of Night,
She always kept her promise of the Day.
O let me think that I can fall asleep
And then each morning still recover
Heaven

MASTER. At the first dimming of the stars.
No. Heaven
Is ever in our sight.

Master and Lackey

LACKEY. Alas, alas!
This place is what I always thought it
was
And my worst fears are being realized!
MASTER—Do you not see the light returning now?
LACKEY—It has the semblance of an earthly dawn;
Perhaps all is not lost.
MASTER. Do you behold
Temples?
LACKEY. I see a circus tent appearing.
MASTER—You are perverse: here are no circus
tents.
LACKEY—And, yonder, master, is a cosy inn.
It must be time for breakfast.
MASTER. Look for temples.
LACKEY—I see one, sir.
MASTER. You ought to see ten thousand.
LACKEY—There'd be no place for inns and circus
tents
If that were true.
MASTER—Of course there is no place.
Here shall rise only temples.
LACKEY. Do you not
Behold these barns, these houses as I do?
MASTER—If I behold them I reproach myself
For having such unseemly thoughts of
Heaven.
I'm going to the temple.
LACKEY. I'll go with you,
And later we shall breakfast at the inn.
MASTER—Once we have passed the temple doors we
never

Master and Lackey

Shall come away unless, indeed, it be
To visit other temples.

LACKEY. O there is
A crowd of people coming from the
church
And in their faces shines a ruddy glow
And they are crying: "Now our prayers
are said,
Let us go wander all day in the fields."

MASTER—I'll stop them.

LACKEY. Step aside with me, my master,
Or they might sweep you with them far
away
From the church doors.

MASTER. Such conduct here in Heaven!
I knew the Lord was tolerant on earth,
I thought he was intolerant in Heaven.
Will He not blast them with His thun-
derbolt?

LACKEY—O hear yon lover as he passes, saying:
"I prayed the Lord of Heaven earnestly
To grant me Julia's love: she is so fair."

MASTER—What sacrilege! A lover here in
Heaven!

How can this be sir?

LACKEY. List! He has not finished.
"This garland will I bear to Venus'
shrine
And all the altars of the gods shall burn
That ought to burn when men's hearts
are on fire.

Master and Lackey

I hope to win her love before tonight
That I may live contentedly in Heaven."

MASTER—Where is the thunderbolt?

LACKEY. There is a halo
About the lover's head.

MASTER. None but the saints
Should wear them.

LACKEY. Evidently things have changed
In Heaven.

MASTER. These are aberrations, lackey.

LACKEY—Let us then sleep and dream that they are
true.

MASTER—I did not come to Heaven's court to
sleep.

The mind reposes here and not the body.
My mind is now reposing. In one
thought

Of greatness I shall wrap me like a cloak.
I am prepared now for more fair sensa-
tions

Than I have ever known.

LACKEY. I shall be sleepy
If I sit thus for long.

MASTER. I have found matter
To occupy my spirit through long ages:
I'm thinking of Eternity.

LACKEY. I'm thinking
Of dishes, circus riders, games and
dances.

I do my best to ponder on one thing;
This cursed habit of variety

Master and Lackey

Will not let go its hold. O tell me, master,
ter,

That I may go to sleep, 't is the one way
To have the right demeanor here in
Heaven.

I'm too alert for such a place as this.
We thought the slumbers sweet which
brought oblivion

Of petty things which mortal men call
woes,

But what were they beside this fairest
slumber

Which brings to me forgetfulness of
Heaven?

Good night, dear master.

MASTER.

Do not fall asleep!

Suppose that following your bad example
The Master like his Lackey fell asleep?

LACKEY—It would not matter: we might both
awake

And find this Heaven nought but a bad
dream.

I

Soon there was nothing to be heard or seen.

't was such a silence as may coming between

Two sudden takings of a planet's breath

When it has had a close escape from death.

2

't was such an emptiness as might be found

If God should sink into a peace profound

Master and Lackey

And there were no more pictures in His mind.
"It is the Heavens which salute mankind."

3

The lackey said. And soon the Dark was gone,
Driven to flight by the far sweeping dawn,
And an awed whisper through the silence ran
As in its turn each planet bowed to man.

Master and Lackey

EPILOGUE

I

Perhaps you ask where these wayfarers are
Today? Are they still sleeping in some star
Whose only care is to turn noiselessly
That their long sleep may sweet and dreamless be?

2

For one of them I cannot say. Who dares
To guess along what roads the master fares?
As for the lackey, he's of noble birth,
He found some way of getting back to earth.

TWO KNIGHTS IN LOVELAND

PROLOGUE

Two knights are traveling across the plain;
The meadows have been newly washed with rain;
And there are eyes that look for fantasy,
And there is talk of joy and harmony.

SCENE I

An Inn.

STRONGHEART—Faithful companion, lay your whip
aside,
Remove your spurs, your buskins now
unlace,
Let the proud feathers on your riding
cap,
Instead of pirouetting in the wind,
Over the table's edge here in this room
Excite a kitten's curiosity.
Our horses now shall in the stable rest
And if, when galloping across the land,
They feel an impulse to turn other ways
Than we would have them go who hold
the reins
We'll know it is not for some vague
alarm
But for the food that waits them in the
stalls.

Two Knights in Loveland

FAINTHEART—Good friend, I will believe this is
the end

Though had you said it is not yet attained
I'd have believed you just as readily.

As I had need of you to find the way,
So have I need of you to know the goal.

STRONGHEART—What's this? You do not recog-
nize the sign

Which tells me that our journey's end is
here?

't is true that you must read it in your-
self—

For you might stand bewildered at cross-
roads

Unless the heart within you intimates

Which of two highways is the one to
choose.

FAINTHEART—I always was bewildered at cross-
roads.

If there are crossroads in this land, my
friend,

I'm certain to be fearfully perplexed.

Remind me why it is we come, my friend.

STRONGHEART—Have you forgotten how, one
moon ago,

A fearful ennui fell upon our souls?

We were unhappy dwelling in a land

Where all men's acts took from the ants
their model

Or perhaps from the beehive, God knows
which!

Master and Lackey

Perhaps such ennui we should not have
known
Had there not come a rumor that there
lay
Somewhere on the remainder of that
path
The sun pursued after he left our realm
A land whose people knew another sway,
Loveland the land was called and Love
its queen.
There is a legend that long, long ago
Our kingdom too was governed by this
queen
But war and revolution drove her out.
Which seems a strange thing, for the
rumor said
That ruled by such a noble potentate
The people in the land knew happiness
And joys beyond the measure of our
own.
They say the revolution in our land
Was captained by the women, not the
men.
You know our women folk are Amazons
And they are known sometimes to punish
men
If they should offer them unthinkingly
Attentions which here, men say, women
prize.
FAINTHEART—I think it was dislike of being pun-
ished

Two Knights in Loveland

That made me come with you. I have
been punished

So often just because I wished to show
A woman little marks of courtesy,
Innocent little marks of courtesy.

I know I'm going to be happy here.

STRONGHEART—'t was then that ennui fell upon
our souls,

And in our hearts we blamed our coun-
trymen

For losing such a monarch and we wish-
ed,

Day and night, we might come to see this
realm.

Behold today our enterprise achieved:

We are in Loveland, where is Love, the
queen?

(Enter the Innkeeper).

INNKEEPER—The Queen of Love, masters, awaits
without.

Learning of your arrival in the realm
She orders that the law should be observ-
ed,

Either the last hour of the twenty-four
To go upon your way or else to pledge
Allegiance to the Queen and be forever
Her subjects.

STRONGHEART. We will stay. O let us go
To tell her with what loyalty, what zeal
We enter in her service.

Master and Lackey

(Enter the Queen and attendants)..

THE QUEEN—O pilgrims from afar, I hear ye
come

From that rebellious province to the east
That scorned my sway. What purpose
brings you here

I know not, but unless it be the will
To serve me, then the day has dawned
already

Which you must see die far from my
frontiers.

STRONGHEART—Queen, we would pledge allegiance
to your name

And by our actions would do penitence
For all our unenlightened countrymen.

QUEEN—There was a time when Loveland was the
world:

My kingdom's usages were life itself,
And if there was a convert to the faith
It was the innocent and newborn child,
Who learned with speech to recognize
my sway.

Alas, the time has come when men full-
grown

Should need conversion! Hah, ye have
done well

To come, I never should have sought you
out.

Among the beasts I'd make a proselyte
Rather than in your tribe: rest ye secure.

Two Knights in Loveland

I laugh when provinces like yours rebel
And my indifference is your defence.
But you are penitent. Stand forth, ye
two
Who would be knights of love. Within
my hand
I hold a gift as rich as does that hand
That plucks the stars at dawn and holds
them clasped
Until it sets them back again at even.
I can not give my gift lightly away.
But if the disposition you reveal
That with a knightly character accords,
Then I accept with joy your services.
You, sir, come show your aptness. Take
your bonnet,
Salute these ladies.

*(Strongheart takes his bonnet and makes a sweeping
bow to the ladies).*

QUEEN. *(Aside).* Ah, the noble knight!
 (Aloud). 't was a becoming salutation,
 sir.
One saw your arm that swept the air
would sweep
These women quite away did they not
shrink
And cower at your gaze. And you, his
friend,
Salute these ladies.

Master and Lackey

(Faintheart makes an awkward, deprecating bow).

QUEEN. *(Aside).* O the paltry knave!
The deprecating, miserable knave!
You'd think he was a eunuch with a fan
Putting you all to sleep. *(To the ladies).* Why do you this,
You poor misguided wretch? to do them
good?
Tell the whole pack of them to drown
themselves:
't is thus the Queen of Love feels for her
sex.
Learn this: the purpose of man's court-
esy
Is to display a shapely leg, an eye
That flashes when there's thunder in his
voice.
I fear you have too much to learn to
make
A lover this side death, still you may
try.
You'd make a splendid lover up in
Heaven,—
My poor man, this is earth, these are not
angels
But women. They're not leaning out
from Heaven
To talk with you, you know; no collo-
quy
Is interrupted there when they begin

Two Knights in Loveland

To shower attentions on you. O poor
man,
We'll need the rod that measures dis-
tances
From star to star to calculate aright
Your ignorance. I'd not say of a man,
"This man can be no lover," never,
never.
I therefore bid you and your comrade
here
To go this day upon a pilgrimage.
Count for me all the smiles, like signal
fires,
That may be lit within my borders: you
Must light them. When your pilgrim-
age is done,
Come back to me. I judge a lover best
When he's returning from a pilgrimage
Made in the springtime in the land of
Love.
I leave you, O fine creature, in the care
Of your good genius, and your friend as
well.
Abandoned to the mercy of his own
I think I should too greatly pity him.
Enough. The Queen of Love has other
cares:
God speed you, sirs, upon your pilgrim-
age.

END OF SCENE I

Master and Lackey

INTERLUDE

The time is Spring, straightway we dream of hours
That have as many petals as the flowers
In Paradise, the sweetest, the most rare:
One by one fall the petals, need we care?

SCENE II

An Inn.

(Faintheart enters, followed by the innkeeper).

FAINTHEART—First, tell me, are there any women
here?

INNKEEPER—None, sir.

FAINTHEART. Not even a poor kitchen maid
Who makes a sly pretence of poverty
Just to display her riches at a table
Where a poor weary man seeks rest from
women?

INNKEEPER—Not even a kitchen maid.

FAINTHEART. Housekeepers neither
Who tress white reverend locks upon
their brows
And lo! it is the last snow ere the spring
Which soon you shall see budding in
their hearts?

INNKEEPER—There are no housekeepers either.

FAINTHEART. Not a woman!
Not even, sir, the picture of a woman,
An article of woman's dress, not even
A book that tells of women, nothing,
nothing:

Two Knights in Loveland

That is what I desire, not even, sir,
The possibility within your brain
That in a moment you should talk of
women.

INNKEEPER—By gad, I feel inclined to talk of
women:

Who does not at all hours?

FAINTHEART. I'll go away.

O let not this be falsely called an inn
And to the other comforts for your guests
Add this, deliverance from the thought
of Woman.

INNKEEPER—Are you not he who went on pilgrim-
age?

FAINTHEART—I am. Where else then could a man
have gone,

Who looks like me save on a pilgrimage
To women's hearts? They say Jerusa-
lem

Was a long ways to go in the dark ages,
A long and perilous quest, but this is
farther

And there are fiercer Saracens around
A woman's heart than those who long
ago

Guarded the sepulchre.

INNKEEPER. Where's your companion?

FAINTHEART—I know not. I was taken prisoner,
And, that my captors might take more
delight,

Master and Lackey

I was each day transferred from prison
to prison

In different women's hearts, but I es-
caped,

And that is why I'm here and why I
ask

If there are any women in the inn.

INNKEEPER—There are none here, but look with-
out, my friend.

The Queen of Love is standing at the
door

With all her court.

FAINTHEART. Kind Gods, have pity on me.

(Enter the Queen of Love with her Attendants).

QUEEN—This is the day assigned and he is here.

My friend, you are the last page of the
book

That's written on your life, I see so
clearly

The ending and the ending is disaster.

What, a whole month in this our land of
love

And you maintain the barbarous custom
still

And dare to walk abroad without a
woman?

What can this mean?

FAINTHEART—I was made prisoner.

QUEEN—A prisoner! There's not a woman's heart

Two Knights in Loveland

Ample enough to keep men prisoners
For long.

FAINTHEART. You see that I am free.

QUEEN. You should

Have laid the castle level with the
ground

Where you were captive, but you fled
away,

Leaving it there to hold new prisoners.

To see there shall be no new prisoners

Within a woman's heart, once he is free,

Should be a man's ambition. O you child,

You pityful, incorrigible child!

You should have left one castle standing
still

And cried out proudly to the whole
world: "Here

Where once I was in prison I am king."

What did you tell the women, tell me
this,

Trying to woo them?

FAINTHEART. Here's my answer, Lady.

I thought that you might ask and for de-
fence

I took a clerk one day, when I went
wooing,

That he might note down all the words
I said.

Here is a copy of my plea: you'll wonder

That one who put so much heart, kind-
ness, goodness

Master and Lackey

Into his wooing failed to win a maid.
Will you not read, your grace?

QUEEN. Read it yourself.

FAINTHEART—'t is thus I would begin: "O lovely
maiden,

I understand why there are stars in
Heaven,

They come each night to see you."

QUEEN. The beginning

Is good, but pray continue.

FAINTHEART. "If you knew

The stars were looking at you, would you
look

At me, your humble servant? I'll not
tell you

That they are looking."

QUEEN. Error, error, error!

You should have said: "If there are
stars in Heaven

You shall not see them, lady, for I'll
rise

Magnificent between you and the stars,
And, woman, you shall only look on me."

FAINTHEART—How, lady, should I say such words
as those?

Instead I told her: "You would not in-
quire

Where the sun may be found or where
the stars.

So certainly as they are in the skies,
So certainly I shall be at your side.

Two Knights in Loveland

I am the province which, when there's
rebellion,
Shall never rise, the aid, which, if there's
need,
Shall never fail. I am yours, yours for-
ever."

QUEEN—What, not leave one doubt in a woman's
mind?

What, not the riches of a single doubt?
Poor man, the love is singularly poor
That is not furbished and replete with
doubts.

This man has gone forth sewing certi-
tudes

In the springtide of Love's first pilgrim-
age.

Poor man, I think you need read nothing
more.

FAINTHEART—O lady, I am very miserable!

QUEEN—You have no business to be miserable.

Only a woman should know misery.

But what's the use of telling you your
faults?

You'll never learn to cure them. Stand
aside,

For I see your companion at the door.

(Strongheart appears at the door).

QUEEN—Enter, my lord, and bring your lady with
you:

I'm sure there's room for one.

Master and Lackey

STRONGHEART. For one, dear lady!
I need room for a hundred.

QUEEN. For a hundred!

Doubtless some damsels whom the man
has rescued.

Show them in, sir. (*The ladies enter*).

Now tell me of the deeds

Accomplished in your lover's pilgrimage.

STRONGHEART—You gave as many days and nights
as Heaven

Takes to refurbish and remake a moon.

There was not one passed in anxiety

Lest I should fail in this my enterprise,

And the last day took pattern from the
first.

Behold the trophies of my prowess,

Queen:

Have I done well? (*to the ladies*) Hud-
dle together, you;

I shall have gentle words for you anon,

But be obedient now. You know I love
you.

The proof is I should kill the man who
came

To take from me the least admired of
you.

QUEEN—You mean these are your wives.

STRONGHEART. If men call wives

Women they have subdued and won't re-
linquish.

Two Knights in Loveland

QUEEN—(*Aside*). I fear this lover has misunderstood

No less than did the other. (*Aloud*).

My good man,

You have misunderstood. There's but one wife

Alloted to a man.

STRONGHEART. Yes, so they told me,

Those women there, but when I came to choose,

They said perhaps a hundred could be mine.

QUEEN—You have sinned, sir, and your companion, too.

STRONGHEART—How sinned? I loved them all, I won them all.

The sin would be to love and not to win.

QUEEN—You have sinned, sir. Here are the laws of the realm

I carry with me lest I should forget,

Admiring sinners, what's accounted sin.

You must be punished. (*Aside*). What a lover, though!

I think 't is well that provinces rebel:

Lovers like these are seldom found at home.

Ah, this was my ideal of a knight!

In the beginning I created man

Carefully, thoughtfully, my darling creature,

But womankind I fashioned in the rough

Master and Lockey

And left to man the task to finish her.
Alas, he chose the wrong ingredients,
He made a creature ready to rebel.
My carelessness has cost me half the
world

And now for fear the other half revolt
I see myself in this sad hour condemned
To punish my most favored servitors.
I am compelled each day to compromise,
To be contented with a lessened sway
Lest I no longer should hold sway at all.
I am the shadow of my former self.

(*Aloud*). But listen to my sentence,
one and all—

(*Aside*). Before the world I have to be
severe.—

(*Aloud*). Against this man who has
transgressed our laws,
This man who would possess a hundred
wives.

Go, lock him in a cell called Matrimony
Where, as a guard, a woman night and
day

Shall watch his every act as cats watch
mice.

From such a sentence there is no re-
prieve.

He shall not leave that cell until he die,
Or if it happens that the guardian dies
And he escapes for want of vigilance
A man like him can easily be found
And a new woman set to watch the cell.

Two Knights in Loveland

STRONGHEART—Ah me, for the fair liberty I lose!
Why did I ever leave the Amazons?

Mercy, O Queen, I'll be content with
ten,
With six, with five, with three, nay,
Queen, with two!

QUEEN—There is no pity. Carry him away.

(Addressing Faintheart).

You, sir, because you could not win a
woman

Shall wander like a beggar through the
world

And wish on stormy days and freezing
nights

That you might be arrested and locked
up,

As thieves contrive to find a needed shel-
ter.

There shall be no one found to lock you
up—

I sentence you to wander till you die.

Master and Lackey

EPILOGUE

Two knights ride slowly on into a land
Of unknown terrors at the Queen's command.
They ponder as they go, and who shall say
They are disgruntled to have come that way?

I

When they have read me, some will turn away
To poets who have kinder things to say
Of love, to honeyed words, to sweet emotion
That knows no other language than devotion.

2

To poets with the happy faculty
Of being serious untiringly,
To bards more worthy of their high tradition;
They have such splendid talents for omission.

3

Some will so turn and others will remain,
Cry: "Here's a heart and with the heart a brain!
He must have loved, for, see! he likes to play;
He must have thought, with such wise things to
say."

KING SORROW

PRELUDE

**King Sorrow risks his crown in Happyland,
For there are woes quite able to withstand
All cheer and live in lasting martyrdom,
And there are other sorrows that succumb.**

KING SORROW

SCENE I

The scene is a meadow near a castle.

MEEK—I've told you that this is a summer land,
A tuneful land; shall I say more, my
master?
What could I tell you more, save that
it is
The very sort of land you would desire
To find beneath a sky befitting gladness?
Have you not wished for fields that should
accord
With gladsome skies? Well, here they
lie before you
Yet though the land lies in one mood un-
changing
It is not in a trance; it glows with
beauty,
With freedom, aspiration and desire,
Perpetuated each in that best moment
When we most wish that they should be
prolonged.
't is joy which you would not mistake for
sorrow,
't is summer at so delicate a point
That subtle thinkers argue with each
other
How one should rightly name the season
here;

King Sorrow

Some call it springtime, some would call
it summer.

To end their doubts they have the calendar

For whom such things are settled in such
ways;

We, to make sure, look to the sunny skies
Through openings between the round,
green boughs

(Fissures too narrow for the month of
May)

While if we would be sure what month
it is

We've but to listen to the bobolink

Who, once 't is mid July, has other work
Than singing, he must change his coat of
buff.

Master, here is the haven of your rest,
Here is the quiet and the still retreat

Where you'll forget you have a ministry
Or leave your work to other ministers.

KING SORROW—Faithful companion, how can I forget?

I have not ministered for twenty years
To care and grief and woe in my domain
With hopes that on a summer holiday
I, somehow, may obtain forgetfulness.

Nay, rather I prefer not to forget.

How can a man live in forgetfulness
Of sorrow? I must with remembered
griefs

Master and Lackey

Refresh my sympathies lest they grow
dull.

O for some sight to make me think of
home!

In all this valley every one is gay
And I've not even heard an infant cry.

MEEK—O happy respite for a wearied man!

KING SORROW—I fear this gaiety will tire me more.

MEEK—But, my good master, you must try to rest.

KING SORROW—"Rest, rest"! And how find rest,

I pray you, here

In unfamiliar scenes? My mind requires
Each day some aspect of reality,
Some trouble to refresh it. You know
well

We live in a sad, melancholy world,
That only certain of us in the breach
Retard each day the great Tormentor's
march.

Then how shall I be absent from the
fray?

I tell you, Meek, this landscape is un-
real:

You'd say there's nought but sunshine in
the world,

And staying here I might believe 't was
so.

Give me the town. Think what the city
is—

Ten thousand doorsteps to ten thousand
woes,

King Sorrow

Ten thousand homesteads of ten thousand
and griefs,
And if the thoroughfares are all alike,
Alike then with the drab look of distress.

I cannot loiter here, or, if I do,
Then must I visit every humble roof,
Each hovel, hut and dwelling of the poor,
Until I ferret out some misery.
I'll prove this gaiety is just illusion,
Or, being true, flee from it like the
plague.

MEEK—O then, dear master, you are doomed to
flee.

KING SORROW—Nonsense! There's trouble hidden
everywhere.

(Here people begin to pass by at intervals).

Can you not see these peasants as they
toil
Are bowed beneath their woes? I know
they are,
It takes a trained eye to distinguish grief.
Heigh, yonder ploughman struggling
with your plow,
Alas that you should toil such weary
hours!

PLOUGHMAN—I follow now the pleasant paths of
labor

And I shall follow other paths anon.

Master and Lackey

KING SORROW—Heigh, cartman, hurrying along to town,

Alas you should be caught in such a whirl!

CARTMAN—I'm happy hurrying along to town
And happily, full soon, I'll hurry home,
Forever happy on my changing round.

KING SORROW—Grandmother, what a pity you should walk!

GRANDMOTHER—I have a carriage but I love to walk.

Walking, nobody dreams that I am old.

KING SORROW—Unhappy schoolgirl with the broken toy!

SCHOOLGIRL—A moment's work and it is whole again.

KING SORROW—I think they must pretend such unconcern

Or else it is the bright, deceitful day
Transfusing them with its unnatural joy.

MEEK—They've a like language on a cloudy day.

KING SORROW—I call such language hypocritical
Or, if they are so happy, should they be?
They'd not be happy if they knew the world.

Alas, it is the fruit of ignorance,
Ignorance gross and wilful. What they need

Is an apostle to enlighten them.

MEEK—Master, let us go on to greet our hosts,
The King of Gladness. What strange fantasy,

King Sorrow

That he should have a castle for his
dwelling,
He who is king of merriment and song!
Yet castle never was more beautiful
Than his: perhaps all instruments of
war,
If here transferred, would take on love-
liness.
Yon rise the castle walls. By shady
bowers
Here on this sunny afternoon I brought
you
That when into these pastures we emerg-
ed
The light might seem the burst of a new
day:
Then would you own these castle walls
are fair.
Along the way the river was our guide:
Sometimes it frisked ahead, and now and
then
It turned about to see if we kept pace,
Like a stray dog that will befriend a
man.
Look, like a drawbridge huge, the castle's
shadow
Has been let down to join the flowery
fields.
Come let us at its utmost edge repose:
The King of Gladness will behold us
there

Master and Lackey

And come to talk with us in this fair meadow.

KING SORROW—I see a figure coming toward us now.

I think I ought to know if 't is a king,
Being a king myself.

MEEK. Is it the king?

KING SORROW—Of such a land as this he may be king.

Grief would have bowed him down before his time,

Had he been king of sorrows as I am.

MEEK—There are glad maidens in his retinue.

KING SORROW—They should not form the following of a king.

MEEK—Master, I'll haste to tell him who you are.

KING SORROW—Yes, hasten. It is time, for I believe

He does not know there is a land of sorrow

And that it has a king. (*Alone*). I know not why,

I have a feeling that there's danger here.
I know not what a sorrow has to dread
Environed by such gladness: just the same,

Someone's in danger. It is not myself.
I know that I am steadfast like a king.
To learn that here upon my far frontiers
There lies this little realm of happiness
Frightens me not. I have redoubtable hosts

King Sorrow

To keep my wide domains secure for
sorrow.

And yet there is a menace in the air.

Is it because I am so sensitive

I'm apprehensive of another's woes?

It is to be expected when he suffers

A life time with his fellows that the king

Should suffer, though he should be
leagues away.

Alas, my people, you are suffering

And here I am, your king, your guilty
king,

Somehow persuaded, quite against my
will,

To pass an afternoon in the broad sun-
light.

MEEK—(*Returning with the King of Gladness*).

I'd not be called a traitor to my master

Yet I deliver him into your hands.

KING OF GLADNESS—You shall be called the sav-
iour of your fellows.

You'll place upon his head a fairer
crown,

And he will stand more upright while he
bears it.

MEEK—This is my master, sir, the King of Sor-
rows.

GLADNESS—I am the King of Gladness.

KING SORROW.

Two are meeting

Who never heard before of one another,
I must suppose.

Master and Lackey

GLADNESS. I knew that you were ruling
And always wished to know you, King of
Sorrow.

KING SORROW—I some times have held converse
with the kings
Of Darkness and of Hell: I did not
know
There was another king in all the earth,
Not knowing there were other lands to
govern.

GLADNESS—My kingdom is an ancient realm,
though small.

KING SORROW—I hope you sit secure upon your
throne—
Such mighty kingdoms crowd you on each
side.

KING OF GLADNESS—I think I have good cause to
be secure,
I've lived so long in full security.

KING SORROW—I know not what the realms of grief
may do
When they hear joy dwells close to their
frontiers.

GLADNESS—I know full well.

SORROW. You mean they will do nothing,
As those are wont who view foes with
disdain.

GLADNESS—Perhaps that is my meaning. But I
leave you
To something still more royal than the
king—

King Sorrow

This quiet evening air. It will beguile
you

A moment till I have returned: there are
Affairs of state that call me. Tell me,
king.

Would you believe the King of Glad-
ness troubled

By care of state? In realms where glad-
ness rules

There ought to be no cares, you say.
't is true.

And yet the very day you visit us
It is the fates' will that I should become
Like one of those old kings with work
to do

Which legends tell about.

SORROW. I'm such a king.

Those are not legends which recount my
deeds;

Each story told is true.

GLADNESS. Your kingdom is

So far away that even stories told
Of living kings of sorrow seem like leg-
ends.

But howsoe'er it be, today I labor.

I hope that men shall say of me to-
morrow:

"Never has Gladness done such deeds as
those

He did the day he met Sorrow, his broth-
er."

Master and Lackey

KING SORROW—What is your purpose?

GLADNESS. 't is a thing so vast

I'd have to crowd a kingdom in this
space

To give an illustration. Realms must
lend

Their kings to me. I'd give such chang-
ed kings back

To such changed kingdoms I alone
should know

That they belong together.

(The king of Gladness leaves his guests).

KING SORROW.

Master Meek,

I see the king of Gladness may be proud.

What is his project? Has he told you,
Meek?

MEEK—You'd say it was to send his daughter to
you,

A lovely princess. Do you see her com-
ing?

You would believe an opening in a tree,
Not in yon castle walls, was made for
her

That she might enter in or leave at
will

Her dwelling, she, a dryad.

KING SORROW.

Can this be?

Her eyes have never held a look of sad-
ness,

King Sorrow

Yet they are beautiful, they have not
wept
Yet they are clear and bright! O think,
those cheeks
Were never wet with tears and never
shall be,
And if a man should ever kiss those
lips
They would not open to breathe forth
a sigh
Because he ceased to kiss them: she
straightway
Would find some other pleasure!

MEEK. She is fair,

My master.

KING SORROW. I'll not look at her again,
I am too willing to believe it true.

MEEK—What, master?

KING SORROW. That a woman may be fair
Here in this land of summer and of joy.
I shall be steadfast, for I am the king,
A king, alas, that dares not turn his
eyes

And may be king and master of his soul
Only with eyes averted from a woman.

MEEK—Look on her, King.

KING SORROW. I'll only look upon her
When I shall be a blurred thing to her
eyes

Blinded with tears.

MEEK. Then look upon her, king.

Master and Lackey

KING SORROW—What do you mean?

MEEK.

Behold the princess weeping!

END OF SCENE I.

King Sorrow

INTERLUDE

O King of Sorrow, now's a time for care,
A woman's shedding tears and she is fair:
If you believe your kingdom still may need you,
Beware then where a woman's tears may lead you.

SCENE II

Scene—Before the castle as in the preceding. The King and Meek are conversing.

KING—Yes, I will tell you all. I had despaired
Of finding in the bounds of this domain
One heart whose regular and normal
beat
Was ever interrupted save for joy.
I told myself that sensibility
Is proven by our tears and not by smiles,
Then without doubt they are unfeeling
cattle.
But as my judgment was to be pronounced
And the whole family as one condemned,
All suddenly the daughter of the house
Burst into tears, its honor was redeemed.
I was not one to let a woman weep,
I paid the homage due to one who
grieves,
Then tried to learn the reason of her
tears,

Master and Lackey

But she had fled. I searched and found
her soon.

There in a grove that in the noonday sun
Tucks all its shadows underneath its
boughs

As a hen shields her brood, I found her
sitting.

I came upon her weeping 'neath a willow
That bent like her its sorrow stricken
brow.

Can you imagine Sorrow, servant Meek,
Within a setting more adorable?

Long I entreated her to tell me why
She wept; her woe was inarticulate;
Her grief could find no voice. I was
amazed

At such a show of sorrow. I have seen
Women who wept since ever I was born
But I had never seen one weep like this.
And still she wept and night time had
come on

And I had spent, the first time in my
life,

All my stored wealth of pity fruitlessly.
We came home through the darkness and
I said

Farewell (a thing unheard of) to a
friend

Before together we had said farewell
To sorrow. All the night I thought of
her.

King Sorrow

"Here is a sorrow that is infinite,"
I thought, and then the notion grew
apace

That I, trained all my life by lesser
griefs,

Might well devote the rest of it to watch,
To study and at last to cure this woe,
Greater than all the rest. Aye, 't is so
great

It may well need a lifetime for its cure.
I saw the sequel was no more nor less
Than marriage, but my scruples passed
away.

If against marriage I rebelled till now
It was for fear a woman's grief was
hollow;

I wished a grief unbounded like a god's.
No danger here of waking up some day
To find her melancholy gone forever.

Her sorrow will attract me like the pole
And I'll be faithful to a grief like hers.

MEEK—And have you told her, Master, of your
purpose?

KING SORROW—I told her, having won the king's
consent,

And she agreed to be my wife with tears.

MEEK—O, Master, aren't you happy that you
came?

You may have cause to thank your ser-
vant Meek.

And is it true that for your lady's sake

Master and Lackey

You'll stay forever in the Happy Valley?

KING SORROW—The whole world's sorrow is as nought to hers;

Shall I abandon it for lesser woes?

My kingdom well may spare me for a while.

Who would have thought to find the fairest altar

Of sorrow in the midst of Happiness?

(The Princess enters).

MEEK—Here is your lady, Master, and she smiles.

KING SORROW—O there are times when I can make her smile.

Poor suffering soul, with courage still to smile,

Though with the impulse and desire to weep!

Venus, I think, was born from women's tears;

('t was this they called the sea) and when they flow,

Her chalice seems to glide from tear to tear

As though from wave to wave! Be not afraid,

Smile still! Be sure that I shall understand!

I know the undercurrent is distress.

King Sorrow

Your joy is just a heroine's disguise,
And to the end I'll be your comforter.

PRINCESS—O will he never cease to pity me?
Strange consequence of an imprudent
wish!

My fairy godmother, when I was born,
Promised if ever I had need of her,
She would fulfill the first prayer that I
made.

And so I prayed that she should make
me sad

Just for one day—no other way there is
Than magic to make men unhappy here.
I hoped to win his pity with my tears,
And with his pity win of course his love.
By Heaven, if I won his love I know not,
It is so certain that his pity's won.

For now the charm is broken and I am
Once more my true carefree and happy
self,

He thinks my happiness is but a feint,
And still persists, alas! in pitying me.
O could I only think of some device
To make him see me as I truly am!

O King, behold the smile upon my face.

KING SORROW—I'll own the imitation's masterly.

PRINCESS—Look deep into my laughing eyes, O
King.

KING SORROW—Sorrow has never known more fair
disguise,

PRINCESS—Do you not see me leap and dance, O
King?

Master and Lackey

KING SORROW—Enough! I am persuaded of your skill,

And now I beg you be yourself once more.

PRINCESS—I am myself.

KING SORROW—No, you are in a trance.

This humor soon will pass and you will be

My melancholy princess once again.

PRINCESS—I'll not.

KING SORROW—But even if your words were true
And you are gay, you'll be unhappy soon.

PRINCESS—I'll never be unhappy anymore.

KING SORROW—No man is certain of his mood to-morrow.

PRINCESS—Excepting those who dwell in Happy Valley.

If in despite of habit, climate, laws,
One of us is o'ershadowed by a cloud,
't is dissipated by the second day
And never may return a second time.

KING SORROW—You'll never once shed tears until you die?

PRINCESS—I'll never once shed tears until I die.

KING SORROW—You are deceiving me.

PRINCESS. No, I am truthful.

KING SORROW—(*Aside*). O what a loving husband here is wasted!

So I have won myself an Amazon,
I whose dream had been an unhappy wife
Whom I should cherish, shelter from
life's woes

King Sorrow

And sometimes render happy by my love!
I am a man of honor and 't is true,
't was my mistake to think her woe im-
mortal.

It should not have deceived my practiced
eyes.

She'll be my wife, and I'll be true to
her.

Thank Heaven, I possess a kingdom still
Where still my sympathies may be re-
freshed.

I'll go and visit it from time to time.

He who at home cannot relieve some
woe

To search it out into the world must go.

PRINCESS—Poor King, I think my words have
made you sad.

Look up, poor King, and let me comfort
you.

KING SORROW—O never once attempt to pity me!

I feel like Samson in Delilah's arms

And to be pitied shears my strength
away.

PRINCESS—Then I will go away. Here at your
side

I fear that I should want to pity you.

I'll be returning soon. Indeed if I

Returned as soon as is a sorrow's ending

After a woe's beginning in this realm,

I'd not be long away. For you I'll wait

A little longer.

Master and Lackey

(Exit the princess).

KING SORROW. See what I have done
By this alliance with the house of Glad-
ness!
I might have known there was no union
with it.
Another proof that grieving kings should
mate
With maidens of the royal blood of Sor-
row!

MEEK—Good Lord, dear Master, in all Happy
Valley

There's not a soul unhappy save yourself!

KING SORROW—Are you then leagued with her to
pity me?

Unhappy Meek, that you should come to
this,

My servant tried and true, to whom I
taught

But this one maxim, never pity me!

O holy Sorrow, I have been betrayed!

What, shall a masquerader in thy name,
A woman shedding false fictitious tears,
Seduce the King of Sorrow from thy
faith?

No, I must go to see thy votaries.

Yonder my worth is recognized at least

And I am known to be thy minister

There every day the orphans flock to me,

The widows, and the halt, the maimed,
the blind,

King Sorrow

And seem contented only with my tears,
As though my tears were all that they
required.

They know my tears are as the royal seal
Upon their troubles, making them au-
thentic,

And opening wide my treasures to their
needs.

Such are my subjects: I'll away to them.
Thank God, there's still employment for
the King

Even though here Pity's superfluous.

(Enter the King of Gladness).

KING GLADNESS—I am the bearer of good news to
you,

O King: we shall be brothers from this
day.

Your kingdom, like a diamond from the
mine,

Polished anew with an unwonted glow
Shall shine in the same setting with my
own,

Twin jewels henceforth in the Happy
Valley!

But let me tell you in less flowery words
All that has happened. In the city
streets,

When you so suddenly had disappeared,
There was awhile a hue and cry for you

Master and Lackey

Then as your absence was each day prolonged
And there came word that you were here
my guest,
The entire city suddenly resolved
To follow on its benefactor's tracks.
It seemed they could not live away from
you ;
They wished to live exalted at your side
Or bear you back in triumph to your
throne.
It was a sad and sorry spectacle
To see that long procession of the poor
Go weeping from the town. Soon they
had left
The city far behind ; like a mill-wheel
They seemed to tread the mighty cloud
of dust
That turned unendingly beneath their
feet.
At length the pilgrims reached this land's
frontier,
Still weeping, but no sooner had they
crossed,
Than lo ! by the contagion of the air,
Each one was seized ; their mourning
turned to joy,
And they began to wonder whence they
came,
And what the reason was that made them
come,

King Sorrow

But all were sure their goal had now
been reached.

There was nobody left who could recall
Their benefactor—they forgot their woes
And with their woes your mercies were
forgotten,

Or if they were recalled accounted
dreams,

Since losing sorrow they had lost the key
To understanding pity. Thus they paused,

Happily in the fields they pitched their
tents,

And never wish to go away again.

And you, O king, you too shall stay forever.

Now we shall be two kings in happy valley.

Would all the kings were here! But I
must go

To let my daughter know of this event.

KING SORROW—There must be still grief in the
countryside;

I'm going to the provinces to govern.

KING GLADNESS—Useless: the country will obey
the town.

KING SORROW—I wish that I had never come away.

I wish I had a kingdom still to warn
Never to make a pilgrimage to Gladness.
Henceforward I am but a king in name;
What need is there of kings for happy
people?

Master and Lackey

Good-bye forevermore to old romance,
The world is growing gay and common-
place.

Alas! I feel that I have need of pity.
O King, pray tell your daughter when
you see her

That poor King Sorrow needs her at his
side.

I think that she will understand my
words.

(Exit King Gladness).

KING SORROW—Thank Heaven that my memory is
clear;

I shall find pleasure in remembered woes,
A pleasure to my subjects now denied.

Dear Meek, I pray you let me sleep, I am
So weary and so lonely and the day
Has brought such changes with it.

MEEK. Sleep, my master.

(Enter the Princess with Weeping Maggie).

PRINCESS—I'd not be cruel in my victory,
And seek to make less bitter his defeat.
He's been so long accustomed to dis-
tress

I think to make him happy by degrees
Would be the surest way, and so I choose
The only person in all Happy Valley
Who wears the semblance of Unhappi-
ness,

King Sorrow

To be the king's companion for a while.
From morn to even Weeping Maggie
cries,
But hers are sobs that need not cause
alarm.
't is her peculiarity to cry,
As it might be another's, sir, to smile,
But she is really happy in her heart.
She'll be a fit companion for the King.
I leave her with your master, sir.

(Exit the Princess).

KING SORROW—*(Waking)*. O horror
I dreamed there were no more tears in
the world,
There being nothing left to weep about.
I wished to comfort and men laughed at
me,
And asked what the expression was I
used.
And when I wept, myself, for sheer des-
pair,
They seemed to be dumbfounded at the
sight
Till someone said he'd seen a circus
clown
Who could make water gush out of his
eyes.
Then all the city came to see me weep
And still I wept, and everybody strove
To imitate me but they strove in vain.

Master and Lackey

At last they carried me to the police
And had me taken into custody,
As one afflicted with a strange disease
Which in my person must be smothered
out.

There in a cell I languished when I
woke,
Annoyed by glances from the passers-by,
But if what I have dreamed is true and
tears
Are a clown's antics puzzling all the
world,
O take me back into my cell again!

(Weeping Maggie is heard sobbing).

MEER.

Listen!

KING SORROW.

I seem to hear a woman sob!

O let me see her that I may be sure!

Then I was only dreaming? O thank
God!

POSTLUDE

Let us not leave him to a fate so sad;
Have we not time enough for being glad?
Let us then sometimes go and weep for him,
Poor monarch with his eyes from tears grown dim!

A FABLE

A sin one day fell down a well:
Just how it happened, who can tell?
It irritated its possessor,
He looked in vain for its successor.
Said he: "An ornament like this
Is something which my friends will miss.
Without a sin in my lapel
They'll say I've never been in hell.
No doubt, I'll have to fish it out;
My sin I cannot live without."
And so he fished, his friends fished too.
Said they: "The work is vain we do.
Search as we will no sin is there";
Nor could they find it anywhere.
Whereupon to his consternation
They said it was imagination:
Into a well could he let fall
A sin he'd never had at all?
But he, although they called him dunce,
Swore he had had a failing once.
They said: "To see is to believe."
Our hapless friend began to grieve,
And in a little while he died
Without his sin, his former pride.

BLUEBEARD

Bluebeard one day killed all his wives,
A matter of some hundred lives.
Said he: "To h— with cutting throats
And silencing their pretty notes!
I'll have but one wife after this,
And that shall be my height of bliss."
So Bluebeard went in quest of one
From rising sun to setting sun.
Alas, alas, for all things human!
Poor Bluebeard couldn't find the woman.
Dozens of them he found to kill
But none to live with, calm and still.
So in his castle all alone
He dreamed of women he had known,
And round the circle of his brain
They passed, a long funeral train.

A Prayer

A PRAYER

O thou who dost inspire men with thy mirth,
Thou gentle, kindly and forgiving earth,
Thou who hast taught me to be glad and play,
Let me be just to the great Far Away.

Forbid that I should people other spheres
With formless wraiths and cruel doubts and fears,
Forbid that taught by thee to 'covet light
I should plunge the Beyond in clouds and night.

Let me not dream of any Being there
Who does not smile, finding creation fair,
For if he cannot laugh he must be blind,
And if he cannot smile he is unkind.

No, let me think of nothing, far and wide,
Which thou couldst not have carried in thy side,
Earth, kindly mother, who hast fostered me,
Mother of joy, mother of purity.

Afterword

AFTERWORD

Because the music which I sing is gay
Will men believe that I have put away
Sorrow and Grief and that I am serene
With the great Calm of those who have not seen?

And when in time I'll tell of tragic forms
Which I have seen walking amid the storms,
Shall then a voice be found to say of me:
"He has abandoned his serenity"?

I care not what they say, or now or then:
Be this my lot and portion among men,
To have built up, when all around was Night,
A temple to thy praise, O Joy and Light.

o circumst.
from the Building

